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SUBJECT: DARFUR PEACE AGREEMENT: TOUGH SELL IN REFUGEE CAMPS

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: Sudanese refugees say they will support the Darfur Peace Agreement if Sudan Liberation Movement faction leader Abdelwahid Nur signs and their need for individual compensation are adequately met. From May 23 to 27, P/E officer traveled to six of twelve refugee camps to explain what the Darfur Peace Agreement offers refugees, the dynamics of the Abuja peace process, and the next steps in the peace process. The refugees' priorities are: security in Darfur guaranteed by an international force, individual compensation to replace lost possessions, and justice for the perpetrators of criminal acts. Power-sharing issues were rarely mentioned. The refugees complained that they were not part of the negotiations and want to be consulted and involved in the implementation of the peace agreement. Support for or against the agreement is personality-driven more than issue-based as refugees expressed support for the positions of individual leaders, rather than the agreement itself. Given the high-level of misinformation being spread, particularly by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in the camps, we recommend that a sustained public diplomacy effort focusing on compensation, security, and justice issues be undertaken to educate the refugees and displaced Sudanese what the agreement does for them as individuals. End Summary.

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BACKGROUND  
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¶2. (SBU) Post reproduced and bound 250 copies of the Darfur Peace Agreement in Arabic, French, and English for the twelve Sudanese refugee camps in Chad. In addition, each refugee committee received factsheets in English and Arabic and copies of relevant UNSC and African Union resolutions. UNHCR arranged for P/E officer (who was a member of the USDEL at the Darfur Peace Talks) to visit six of the twelve camps over a four day period (May 23-27) to discuss the agreement with the refugees. Refugee committees and non-governmental organizations in the six other camps received copies of the peace agreement, factsheets, and resolutions. During each meeting, P/E officer emphasized the importance of signing an agreement for bringing in a UN force, the provisions within

the agreement for compensation and reconstruction, and creation of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultations to bring more Darfurians, especially refugees and displaced persons, into the implementation of the agreement.

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GOZ AMIR-KOUKOU  
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13. (SBU) On May 23, the primarily Massalit refugees at Koukou were skeptical of the Darfur Peace Agreement because "the authors of criminal acts" (i.e the janjaweed) are still at large and attacking closer and closer, threatening the 18,000 camp residents. The disarmament of the janjaweed and restoration of security in Darfur by an international force are their top priorities. They also were concerned about individual compensation for property and livestock losses incurred by janjaweed attacks. Nonetheless, the refugees said that they will do whatever Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction leader Abdelwahid Nur instructs them to do. If Abdelwahid signs on, they will support the agreement. The refugee leaders accused SLM faction leader Minni Minnawi of signing the agreement for his own interests.

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GOZ BEIDA-DJABAL  
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14. (SBU) The refugees at nearby Djabal Refugee Camp (population 14,000), also dominated by the Massalit and Fur tribes, focused on receiving compensation for their destroyed homes and looted possessions and livestock during the discussion on May 24. The refugees complained bitterly about the African Union force's inability to stop janjaweed attacks, which they argued continue on a daily basis. They noted that the janjaweed are "everywhere" now that they have

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been integrated into the security services. The group said that an international force must disarm the janjaweed before they consider returning to Sudan. The refugees asked how they will be included in the Darfur-Darfur dialogue. Finally, they stated that they will support the agreement if SLM faction leader Abdelwahid Nur signs on.

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BAHAI-OURE CASSONI  
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15. (SBU) The 29,000 refugees at Oure Cassoni crossed into Sudan from the so-called "liberated areas" now controlled by SLM faction leader Minni Minnawi. The camp is overwhelmingly Zaghawa and pro-Minni. On May 25, refugee leaders said that the majority of the refugees at Oure Cassoni supported the agreement. Refugees were interested in the dynamics of the negotiations and why Abdelwahid and Justice and Equality Movement's (JEM) Khalil Ibrahim did not sign. They demanded that individuals be compensated for their losses and a mechanism be developed to assist the thousands of widows and orphans created by the crisis. In addition, the refugees requested an international force to secure Darfur.

16. (SBU) Women refugees spoke up and said that they do not care who signs the peace agreement, they will accept any peace that allows for the respect of their basic human rights. One woman asked what will be done to redress the harm caused by the rape of women and girls and the traumatization of children forced to flee burning villages. The women also asked that their possessions be replaced and stated that they would return once the security situation was stable.

17. (SBU) A JEM supporter, and known camp agitator, said that the rebel movements deserve the presidency, not the fourth position in government. He also said that only a minority tribe signed the agreement and began a slew of

personal insults against Minni Minnawi. Another refugee countered that Minni's Vice President is a Fur and his Secretary General a Tunji. The other refugees silenced the

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JEM supporter, but he continued to interject and interrupt the session, which ended in a shouting match between him and the rest of the camp. Tensions in the camp are elevated due to the presence of a large encampment of JEM-led mercenaries and dissident SLM members at nearby Carriari lake. On May 23, members of this group drove through the camp in a display of force and may have recruited a few residents. The aim of the JEM-SLM group which is receiving material support from the Chadian Government, according to a defector, is to attack Minni Minnawi and then to attack Chadian rebels along the border.

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BREDJING  
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18. (SBU) At Bredjing on May 26, the primarily Masselit and Fur population (29,000) was highly organized politically for the discussion. This camp closely identifies with Abdelwahid and expressed their support for the agreement if Abdelwahid signs it. A recent forced recruitment drive, supported by local Chadian authorities and dissident SLM commander Khamis Abdullah, included the abduction of the camp's refugee committee leader who opposed the recruitment. The refugees at this camp, said that an agreement signed by Minni Minnawi alone is not enough. They stated that they "agree" with Abdelwahid that their possessions must be replaced and that 700 million USD is not enough to reconstruct Darfur. The refugees said that they want to be paid "one-by-one" for their losses. The group criticized AU Commission President Alpha Omar Konare and Darfur Negotiations Special Envoy Salim Salim as being Government of Sudan collaborators. Finally, the refugees expressed their support for a UN force and stated that the African Union cannot provide security with its current mandate. Their posters and drawings included slogans such as: "we need individual recompensation for the

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losing of our properties. The agreement doesn't express about compensations and rehabilitation", "the international security council should disarmament of janjaweed militia", and "we all need Darfur in one region". The refugees also demanded to know why the agreement does not address criminal justice issues.

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TREGUINE  
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19. (SBU) The refugees at Treguine, located fifteen minutes from Bredjing with a predominately Masselit and Fur population of 14,000, were less organized politically, but clear in their conditions for their return to Darfur. First, international intervention is needed to restore the security situation in Darfur. Second, those responsible for committing crimes against the local populations must be brought to justice. Third, individuals must be compensated for their losses. Fourth, all armed elements (Sudanese and Chadian) in Darfur must be disarmed and demobilized. The refugees at Treguine were concerned that a peace agreement signed by one person cannot bring peace. The camp residents are supporters of Abdelwahid Nur and want him to sign to make a "lasting peace". Nonetheless, the refugees were largely satisfied with the agreement and asked specific questions on how the compensation scheme would work. They are also supporters of Abdelwahid Nur.

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FARCHANA  
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¶10. (SBU) Farchana, the first camp established in Chad in 2004, hosts a largely Massalit population of 17,000. Camp residents are supporters of Abdelwahid Nur. European Union Special Envoy Pekka Haavisto had met with the refugee leaders on May 23 to outline the peace agreement. As a result, the group had more specific follow-up questions for P/E officer on May 27. First, the leaders asked how long will it take to get international troops to Darfur and what will be the mandate. They asked why President Bashir continues to oppose a peacekeeping force in Darfur. Second, the group emphasized how important the title Vice President is and expressed concern that the U.S. did not support their demand for one. Third, the group stressed the importance of replacing the refugee's personal possessions. The group of leaders said that it wants Abdelwahid to sign the agreement. They expressed discontent with SLM dissident Khamis Abdullah, who they charged, was spearheading the recruitment in the camps to create his own force in collaboration with the Chadians.

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COMMENT: LESSONS LEARNED  
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¶11. (SBU) During the course of the refugee camp briefings, the agreement's provisions on power-sharing, integration of forces, and wealth-sharing were completely overshadowed by the personal losses incurred by the refugees. We began to tailor the discussions to focus on the compensation provisions (individual, reconstruction, refugee return packages, free education at all levels). A factsheet brought down to the individual level could be more persuasive with refugee and displaced populations and their leaders. Additional discussions of the agreement with Sudan Liberation Movement members on May 28 revealed a total lack of comprehension of the compensation provisions in the agreement. It is very clear that this lack of understanding hinders their ability to support or sell the agreement. We found that the refugees need to be able to envision what their return will look like and how the various funds will work. In addition, highlighting the justice mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court and UNSC sanctions, as well as the types of discussions that will be held during the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultations on bringing individuals to justice, helped answer some of the refugees

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concerns. The Sudanese refugees in Chad were not strongly opposed to the agreement itself, but instead the dislike for SLM faction leader Minni Minnawi clouded refugee opinions of the accord's prospects. It will be critical to include large numbers of representatives from the refugee and displaced persons camps in the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue to overcome their feeling of marginalization in the peace process.  
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